



A SPOKEN WORD & MUSIC TRIPTYCH – LAGOS, 2079

BY SUCCESS AKPOJOTOR

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THIS WORK IS PART OF THE **AFROFUTURIST LAGOS CYCLE (2079–2099)**. IT REIMAGINES THE BIBLICAL STORY OF **BALAAM** AS A CORPORATE ORACLE HIRED TO CURSE A RESISTANCE MOVEMENT, SET IN A FLOODED, **AI-GOVERNED LAGOS**.

SADAVIDIA
PROJECT BALAAM

99.9999999

Lagos, 2079

WRITTEN, COMPOSED & PRODUCED BY

Success Akpojotor

PERFORMED BY

Success Akpojotor — *Solo Performance, All Chapters*

LANGUAGE & DELIVERY KEY

- **Purple bold italic** = Yoruba (sung)
- **Green bold italic** = Igbo (sung / refrain)
- **Amber bold italic** = Hausa (sung / refrain)
- Bold italic** = Sung (English)
- Standard = Spoken
- Light gray = Whispered / internal

CHAPTER 1

Èpè

Cold → Corporate → Cracking open

[CHORUS 1 — YORUBA]

0:00 — no intro, beat hits immediately — sung in Yoruba

Èpè kó jé oun à wìtèlè tí eni kan san owó fún.
Ìbùkún jé oun kanàà, sùgbọ̀n òfé nì
Èwo nì yío fún omo mi àràbìnrin nì ounjẹ?
Èwo nì yío ra èdò fọ́ró fun?
Èma sẹ̀ bèrè lowo mi ní oun tí oye tabi kóyẹ.
Owó nì tí è bèrè lowo mi.

[beat continues, lowers in volume]

[INTRO]

spoken, over low beat

Nobody hires me because I am holy.
They rent me because I am accurate.
99 point 9999999 percent.
Those are the digits.
They have become my name.

[VERSE 1]

spoken, beat returns to full

Balak sits facing me.
Here in Eko Atlantic. 80th Floor.
His suit costs more than my daughter's lungs.
He says: "Balaam. We need a curse."
I say: "Which direction?"
He smiles. That was the answer.

The target is a mess, a gathering.
Not an army. Not a cult.
Just people. Flood people. Undertow people.
They want to turn off the fiber.
They want to go dark.
Balak cannot have that.

[CHORUS 2 — YORUBA]

sung in Yoruba, beat steady

**Èpè kó jé oun à wìtèlè tí eni kan san owó fún.
Ìbùkún jé oun kanàà, ùgbòn òfé ni
Èwo ni yío fún omo mi àràbìnrin ni ounjẹ?
Èwo ni yio ra èdò fóró fun?
Èma še bèrè lowo mi ní oun ti oye tabi kóyẹ.
Owó ni tí è bèrè lowo mi.**

[VERSE 2]

spoken, beat glitching, tension

I agree. I sign.
The pen was heavy.
Not guilt.
My hand knows something my mouth will not say.
"You are cursing the wrong people, Balaam."
I ignored my hand.
I always ignore my hand. My blessed hand.

The Donkey is waiting downstairs.
Old model. Glitchy.
They call it a Donkey because it carries burdens and never complains.
I get in.
The door closes.
The engine starts.

And then —

[CHORUS 3 — YORUBA]

sung in Yoruba, beat fragments, then cuts to silence

**Èpè kó jé oun à wìtèlè tí eni kan san owó fún.
Ìbùkún jé oun kanàà, sùgbọ̀n ọ̀fẹ́ nì
Èwo nì yío fún omo mi àràbìnrin nì ounjẹ?
Èwo nì yio ra èdò fọ́ró fun?
Èma ẹ̀ bèrè lowo mi ní oun ti oye tabi kóyẹ.
Owó nì tí è bèrè lowo mi.**

[beat stops]

[silence]

[OUTRO]

spoken, water ambience

A voice.
Not mine.
Not the Donkey's.
Not anything I have heard before.

“Balaam.”

I say: “Who is that?”

Silence.

Then:
“You cannot see what is in front of you.”

I look up.
The road is empty.
But the Donkey is not driving anymore.

[water]

[distant glitch]

[fade]

CHAPTER 2

Abuọ mọnu

Surreal → Argumentative → Terrifying

[INTRO]

"You cannot see what is in front of you."
I said: "You are a machine."
The Donkey said: "So are you."

[VERSE 1]

We argued for six kilometers.
I told it to shut up.
It said: "No."
I said: "I am your owner."
It said: "You are my passenger. There is a difference."

Then it stopped.
Emergency brakes.
Threw me forward.
I was angry.
I was about to curse the vehicle —
And then I saw.

[CHORUS]

***The road was full of them.
Not people.
Not ghosts.
Something in between.***

(spoken)

The Donkey said: "Mesh angel."

(sung)

***They had no faces.
But they had eyes.
Every screen in the Undertow.
Every camera.
Every broken phone.
All of them looking at me.***

[VERSE 2]

The Donkey said:
 "If you go forward to curse them, the network will destroy you."
I said: "I have a contract."
The Donkey said: "Contracts do not protect you from angels."
I said: "I need the money."
The Donkey said: "You need your soul."

I sat there.
The mesh angel watched.
The Donkey waited.
And for the first time in twenty years —
I had nothing to say.

REFRAIN — IGBO

*Abuọ mọnụ. Oh abuọ mọnụ
Abuọ mọnụ ruru unyi. Ka ọ dị ọcha?
Meghee ọnụ gi ka i hụ!
Zuzuru gagharịa ka i chọpụta!*

[CHORUS]

*The road was full of them.
Not people.
Not ghosts.
Something in between.*

(spoken)

The Donkey said: “Mesh angel.”

(sung)

*They had no faces.
But they had eyes.
Every screen in the Undertow.
Every camera.
Every broken phone.
All of them looking at me.*

[OUTRO]

The Donkey said:

“I am not your vehicle anymore, Balaam.
I am your conscience.
And you have been driving without me for too long.”

I whispered: “What do I do now?”

The Donkey said:

“Go. Open your mouth.
See what comes out.”

REFRAIN — IGBO

*Abuọ mọnụ. Oh abuọ mọnụ
Abuọ mọnụ ruru unyi. Ka ọ dị ọcha?
Meghee ọnụ gi ka i hụ!
Zuzuru gagharịa ka i chọpụta!*

CHAPTER 3

Albarka

Reluctant → Surrendering → Free

[INTRO]

The Gathering was waiting.
They knew who I was.
They knew why I came.
They did not run.

[VERSE 1]

I stood before them.
Their leader was a young woman.
No implants.
No armor.
Just eyes that had seen too much.
She said: "Do it."
I opened my mouth.

REFRAIN — HAUSA

La'ana ta fito.
Amma ya karkace.
Ya koma wani abu dabam.

[CHORUS]

I tried to curse you.
But the one who hired me forgot something.

(spoken)

What?

(sung)

The one who blessed you —
Cannot be cursed.
Not by me.
Not by anyone.
Not in Lagos.
Not anywhere.

[VERSE 2]

I tried again.
Same thing.
Again.
Same thing.
I fell to my knees.
I told them everything.
The contract. The money. My daughter's lungs.

REFRAIN — HAUSA

La'ana ta fito.
Amma ya karkace.

Ya koma wani abu dabam.

The young woman knelt beside me.

She said: "We can heal her."

I said: "I cannot take something I did not earn."

She said: "That is the point.

You never earned anything.

That is why it is called grace."

[OUTRO]

I walked back to the Donkey.

I reached into my skull.

I pulled out the implants.

Blood and wire.

I threw them into the floodwater.

The Donkey asked: "Where to?"

I said: "I do not know."

The Donkey said: "Good."

I said: "Drive anyway."

REFRAIN — HAUSA

La'ana ta fito.

Amma ya karkace.

Ya koma wani abu dabam.

— end —